

1993

OPEN ARMS

DECEMBER

VOL. 5

NUMBER 12

..... MICHIANA'S LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

COMING OUT DURING THE HOLIDAYS????

By: Cathy Lambert, CCSW, ACSW

The holidays are here, and the next major one, of course, is Christmas. The BIG ONE where you want to be with your partner and your family. For many wimmin, whether with a partner or single, the issues around coming out at any time of the year, especially around the holidays, can create multiple and diverse reactions.

If the decision is made to come out during the holidays, there are some very important things that one may need to think about prior to that happening. The person needs to be mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepared for whatever reaction they may incur. Also, preparing the family for how they receive such news, may be equally important in how they react to it. It may be helpful to let your family know you have something very important in your life that you need to share with them; something they may have difficulty in understanding; something that is so important to you that it affects your whole life and you would hope they would be willing to listen and to do their best to understand.

Equally important is to decide who, when, where, and how you want to tell your news. Will you tell family members individually, such as brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, parents; will you tell both parents together; is it important that the entire family know or just chosen people? When and where do you want to tell them; will it be in private, at dinner, while shopping, etc. . .? Remember, setting the stage is important. Telling your parents you're a lesbian following a family argument or during a very stressful period in their life, may not set the stage for acceptability, receptability, understanding, or support. how you tell a family member is equally important. You may want to practice with a friend or your partner, to get an idea of what you want to say, how you want to say it, and the impact of your words. Use "I feel" statements; listening to yourself, such as the volume of your voice, its tone, your pace, your attitude; look at yourself in the mirror when you practice what you want to say; check the impact of your words by observing the other person, asking questions, and stating feelings while inviting feedback without

becoming defensive.

Another equally important aspect of coming out for all wimmin, is to have a support system in place. Remember, while you may have an experience of possibly a burden being lifted, a sense of freedom, a better sense of identity, your family may not have the same experience. A support system can be one friend, but make sure it is one you can talk to. Other support systems include your lesbian support group, a therapist, a church that is supportive of your lifestyle, your partner, the gay/lesbian community, or a family member who already knows and is supportive. With some tools in hand, hopefully, your journey will be more successful and more rewarding.

**DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS**

A recent survey by the National Center for Lesbian rights showed that when domestic partner benefits are available to all unmarried employees, the majority using them are heterosexuals. Also, employers over estimated the number of people who would use the option. San Francisco estimated 2,000 but enrolled only 175, 92 of them lesbian or gay, while West Hollywood and Seattle reported only one-third wanted same-sex benefits. In addition, there has not been a significant increase in the cost to cover domestic partners. Lotus Corp. had only 12 out of 3,000 employees sign up. Berkeley initially paid a surcharge to cover domestic partners but that was dropped three years later presumably because there were no additional costs. For more information about domestic partner benefits, write for the book, **Recognizing Lesbian & Gay Families: Strategies for Extending Employment Benefit Coverage**, \$15.00 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling, at NCLR, 1663 Mission St., 5th FL, San Francisco, CA 94103.



COMMUNITY EVENTS



VIDEO NIGHT BY DESIGN

starring Patti Duke

Well, finally we found a film where the Lesbians live-together happily ever after. These wimin desire motherhood and take some creative and amusing steps to bring about this condition. There is some heterosexual junk in this film, however, it is treated with a feminist viewpoint, which makes even that almost unoffensive.

It's a fall evening beginning at 7:00 p.m.. Bring snacks, drinking OK, smoke 'em outside. If you have a special cushion or pillow--feel free to bring it--BE COMFORTABLE. Popcorn will be available.

Friday, Dec. 3rd

Gloria and Julie's

Call for directions: (616)-684-4011

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

Tues. 7-9 p.m.

For info, write:

LSG

P.O. Box 1281

Niles, MI 49120

Beginning January 1, 1994, the Lesbian Support Group will be needing a new home for their meetings. It has been held at the present location for one year and circumstances are dictating time for change. Anyone who feels they might have an interest in offering some time and place to our Lesbian Support Group, please call Gloria at (616)-684-4011

DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

A directory of the lesbian/gay groups in the Michiana area has been compiled by the NOW Lesbian committee and information from the directory is available by calling an Open Arms staff member.



A THANK YOU FROM LAVENDER RHYTHM

Lavender Rhythm wishes to thank Open Arms for the three books donated for door prizes at the Halloween dance. Keep up the good work, Open Arms.

3RD FRIDAY OUT

Annual PAPA JOE'S CASADEPASTA

1209 Union St., Mishawaka

Friday, Dec. 17th, 7:00 p.m.

Reservations due by Wed., Dec. 15th

Call Lu or Sheree for reservations: (616)-684-6365



GAME NIGHT HOLIDAY POTLUCK

Dec. 18th

Start at 6:00 p.m. - Eat at 7:00 p.m.

Dish to pass-BYOB-Designated smoking area

Optional gift to share (\$5.00 limit)

Call 287-4548 for directions

NEXT LAVENDER RHYTHM DANCE

Lavender Rhythm is proud to announce the next dance will be on Jan. 15th., 1994 at 8:00 pm in the Milton Township Community Hall. This January dance will bring with it many changes in layout and entrance. These changes will allow more room for dancing. We will be using the rear entrance of the hall, park along the side of the building. This change allows more privacy for those who want to smoke outside. Please spread the word so the dance will be a great one.

See you in January.



OTHER EVENTS?

If there are other events that you would like to see on this page please send the information to the *Open Arms* mailbox or call one of the staff members with the information by the 10th of the month.

NOTES FROM THE LAVENDER RHYTHM D. J.

The Oct. 30th. Lavender Rhythm dance was attended by 69 wonderful Womyn. The dance floor was kept busy most of the night. I know there were many womyn out there who would have enjoyed hearing that favorite song or a song from a certain decade such as 50's or 60's. I'm in the process of mixing new music for our next dance scheduled for Jan. 15th., 1994. If you have a song you would like to listen to or dance to please contact me. I will try to include it for the next dance. Call 616-684-7362 and ask for Laura. All I ask is that the song be given to me by Jan. 2nd. Hope to see you dancing at the Jan. dance. Laura

---Roberta Achtenberg was the keynote speaker at the 1993 Human Rights Campaign Fund dinner held in Detroit Nov. 12th.

---Ada Drive, outside of Grand Rapids, MI, is the "adopt-a-road" for a group of lesbians and gays from the Grand Rapids area.

---The Lesbian AIDS Project has created a Safer Sex Handbook for Lesbians and a newsletter called LAP Notes which is available by writing or calling: The Lesbian AIDS Project-GMHC, 129 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, (212)-337-3532.

---Queen Anne (1665-1714), the last of the Stuart line in Britain, was married to a Danish nobleman but it is reported that the true love of her life was Sarah Churchill. Sarah Churchill was a duchess who became Anne's attendant and wrote passionate letters to the Queen. --info from *Tri-State Newsletter*--

---Did you know the mayor of Santa Monica, CA, Judy Abdo is a lesbian? Also, San Francisco School Board Member Angie Fa, Seattle City Council Member Sherry Harris, San Francisco Supervisor Carole Migden are also lesbians that have been elected to public office. --info from NCLR Newsletter--

---Lesbian couples can adopt each others children in the District of Columbia, Alaska, California, Massachusetts, Michigan (some counties), Minnesota, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, and Washington. --info from NCLR Newsletter--

---In Vancouver, two lesbian were denied access to the only sperm bank in British Columbia by the doctor who operates the clinic. The wimmin have filed a lawsuit against him claiming discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and family status, which is a violation of the Human Rights Act. --info from *off our backs*--

---The Texas ACLU is considering representing two women in a Texan prison who say that "pat-down" searches by male guards is essentially sexual harassment.

---A group of wimmin in Canada is trying to collect enough money to build a monument in memory of the 14 wimmin murdered in Montreal on Dec. 6, 1989. The inscription will say it is for "all the women killed by men". The mainstream media is totally opposed to those words because it implies that men DO kill wimmin! --info from *off our backs*--

---The Dept. of Labor reported that 40% of the wimmin who die while working are murdered yet this number probably does not include prostitutes or other sex workers which would make it even higher. Only 15% of the men who die at work are murdered.

CAN YOU ANSWER THIS?

What year did the Michigan Womyn's Music festival move on to the new land?

In what 1963 movie did Shelly Winters play a Lesbian madam?

---The Lesbian Avengers from East Lansing, MI sent postcards to Judge Buford Parsons (P.O. Box 27032, Richmond, VA 23261), who denied a lesbian custody of her child. The postcards read "You harmed a LESBIAN. Pick up the clue phone, Buford....That shit don't fly no more". Maybe they should ask the judge why isn't it illegal for heterosexuals to raise homosexual children. Another group of Avengers struck at Carlton College when a male student received his diploma and the group stood up and yelled in one voice that he was a rapist. --info from *off our backs*--

---Two lesbians were elected in November, Manhattan Civil Court Judge Marilyn Shafer and San Diego City Councilmember Christine Kehoe.

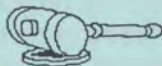
---Discrimination based on sexual orientation is banned under national law in France, the Netherlands, Denmark and New Zealand.

---In Colorado Springs, lesbian and gay activists threw condoms at Will Perkins and other members of the Village Square Presbyterian Church at the Sunday service Nov. 7th. A dozen activists stood up and shouted "Gays and lesbians under attack in Colorado. We act up. This is for Will Perkins. Enjoy your Sunday.", then threw the condoms at Perkins before leaving. Perkins is the cofounder of Colorado for Family Values, the group behind Amendment 2. --info from *Detroit Free Press*--

---A recent study of women over 75 showed that taking estrogen did not provide additional protection against osteoporosis. --info from *Time*--

---A preliminary study on wimmin who smoke indicated that wimmin are twice as likely as men to get lung cancer, double their risk of cervical cancer, researchers have found chemicals from cigarettes in cervical tissue, enter menopause an average of three years earlier than non-smoking wimmin, increase their risk of osteoporosis and wrinkles! --info from *USA TODAY*--

---The first "tea party" did not take place in Boston but in the Carolina's where a group of wimmin boarded British ships and threw out the costly tea. --info from *Detroit Free Press*--



PRIDE ACTION COMMITTEE

Next meeting: Monday, December 6th
5:00 p.m.
R.J.'s on Washington St.
in downtown South Bend

On the agenda will be the planning of a VALENTINE'S - MARDI GRAS - COMING OUT BALL on February 15, 1994 which will offer the opportunity for attending in costume or not, masked or not. Location is yet to be determined. The committee is looking for help in organizing this event.

LESBIAN AND GAY AA GROUPS

Sundays: Elkhart General Hospital, Renaissance Unit,
2nd Floor, 7 p.m.

Mondays: First Unitarian Church, 101 E. Northshore,
South Bend, 7 p.m.

(1st meeting of the month is an open meeting)

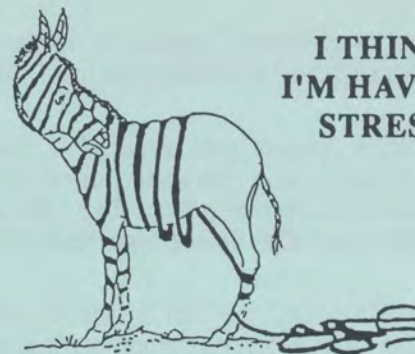
Saturdays: First Unitarian Church, 101 E. Northshore,
South Bend, 8 p.m.



LESBIAN PARENTING

Virginia, Arkansas, Missouri, and North Dakota are the only states that have legal precedents saying that lesbians and gays are unfit parents while New Hampshire and Florida will not allow lesbians and gays to become adoptive parents. However, in Washington, D.C. local officials held a seminar this past summer to instruct lesbians and gays on how to get through the adoption process. And in September, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that a lesbian could adopt her lover's child and become a second parent. The case in Massachusetts was brought to the court by surgeon, Dr. Susan Love, and her partner, Dr. Helen Cooksey, who wanted to adopt the 5-year-old girl they had raised together. The girl was conceived by Dr. Love via artificial insemination with sperm from a cousin of Cooksey's. In order for Dr. Cooksey to become a co-parent, Dr. Love actually had to adopt her own daughter. The religious right is VERY upset about this type of "second-parent adoption". Robert Knight of the conservative Family Research Council says, "It's parental malpractice.{????} This is an attempt to hijack the moral capital of the mom-and-dad family."

But there could be many more of these cases since the estimate of children being born to lesbians via artificial insemination range from a thousand to tens of thousands. At Pacific Reproductive Services in San Francisco, a lesbian-friendly clinic, more that 100 lesbians use the sperm bank each month. And according to a Professor Patterson at the Univ. of Virginia, who reviewed 22 studies involving offspring of homosexuals ranging from toddlers to adults, there is no convincing evidence that children born to homosexual parents had suffered or were more than normally inclined to be homosexual. --info from *Time* and USA TODAY--



I THINK
I'M HAVING
STRESS

Reprinted from U.R.B.I., Uniroyal Retiree Benefits, Inc. Newsletter. Thanks to Jean.



REDWOOD DONATION RECEIVED

We received a thank you letter from the Executive Director of Redwood Records thanking us for our donation. They had, as of the end of October, raised \$120,000 of the \$300,000 needed to continue. The California Arts Council has given a matching grant, so every \$1 you give means \$2 for Redwood. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to Redwood Cultural Work, P.O. Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610.

O.A. has also received a catalog of the CDs and cassettes available from Redwood. Call Mary (234-5986) for a copy.



LESBIAN MOTHERS NEEDED

Marsha Bowlin is writing a paper on lesbian mothering for an IUSB course and would like to interview lesbians who are willing to talk to her about their experiences as a parent or a co-parent. The focus of the paper, however, will not include lesbian couples who have decided to have a baby.

If you are a lesbian parent or co-parent with relevant experience and information to share call Marsha at 287-6881. Actual names will ~~Not~~ be used and your identity will be confidential.

PLEASE TYPE SUBMISSIONS IF POSSIBLE

If it is possible for you to type your submissions on a letter quality typewriter or printer, please do so using a 55 space line. This will make layout much easier. Thanks.

MISSION STATEMENT

Open Arms exists to disseminate diverse information of interest to the Michiana lesbian community.

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NOTES FROM A WEEKEND GETAWAY

We spent a mini-vacation in Indy the first weekend in November and took in two Branching Out Productions events at the Madam Walker Theater: Kate Clinton and Sweet Honey In the Rock. It was a great weekend of entertainment and feasting.

We stayed in a bed and breakfast owned and operated by a woman: Le Chateau Delaware, 1456 N. Delaware (317) 636-2150, which is a treat by itself. The building is modeled after a centuries-old French chateau (but with modern plumbing and heating). Mignon, the owner, is a delight and the breakfast is a gourmet treat. The package is not inexpensive, but is worth the money, especially when it means supporting a woman's business.

Other eating treats during the weekend included a wonderful Greek lunch and a Sunday brunch at a New Orleans restaurant, both in the Broad Ripple area near Dreams and Swords Bookstore. We found a lesbian or gay owned business to matronize: Tomorrows, a womyn's bar on N. Meridian which turned out to be a friendly place with the obligatory pool table and good oriental food.

We spent an hour or so soaking in lesbian culture in Dreams and Swords and discovering new and exciting reading material. They have moved one block from their old location and are now at the corner of 65th and Ferguson.

Finally we got to the performances at Madam Walker--the original reason for our trip. Kate Clinton gave her usual witty, womyn-oriented critique of this woman-hating society. The Topp Twins opened for Kate Clinton with a country music-yodeling performance and a unique ability to establish audience rapport even with those of us who don't appreciate county music.

The first half of the Sweet Honey In The Rock concert the next night was a new musical experience for some of us. The emphasis was on African chants and the experience has been described as evoking a feeling of rising from the primeval dust--a powerful, gut-level experience. The second half of the concert included some of their more traditional protest, consciousness raising songs, including a very well done rap on equal rights for women.

We came back rested, well-fed and full of womyn energy and recommend taking advantage of the Breaking Out Productions events to anyone in need of a change of scene.

Mary and Linda

OPEN ARMS STAFF

Mary (219) 234-5986
Sheree (616) 684-6365
Kaye & Marcia (219) 271-0338
Advertising-Maggie: (219) 287-3124
Subscriptions: Kaye or Marcia



OPEN ARMS DEADLINE/MEETING

The deadline for submissions for the January *Open Arms* is December 10th. Submissions can be mailed to Open Arms, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or given to Mary, Sheree or Kaye. Submissions received after December 10th may not be published in the January newsletter.

Newsletter meeting: Sunday, December 12th, 1993 at Kaye and Marcia's, 6:30 p.m. Call 271-0338 for directions.

EVENTS COORDINATORS

3rd Friday Out: Lu & Sheree (616) 684-6365
Wimin's Video Night: Gloria & Julie (616) 684-4011
Game Night: Sheree (616) 684-6365
Sunday Brunch: Kaye & Marcia (219) 271-0338

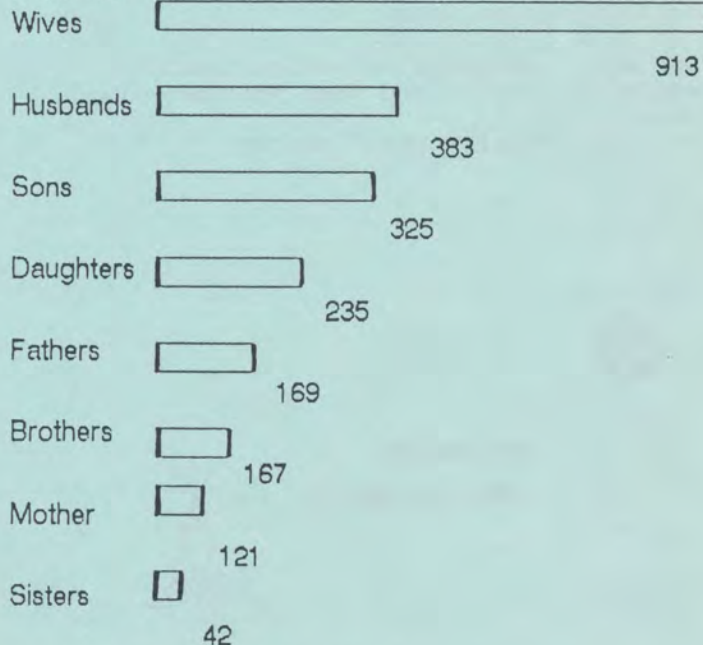
EDITORIAL POLICY

We may edit any article submitted for length or content. We ask that all articles submitted be signed and typed, but will respect the wishes of the author by not printing her name if so requested.

.....

SISTAH IS SAFER THAN THE WIFE!

The following chart shows the FBI statistics for 1992 on the number of family members who were killed by other family members.



--info from Time, Oct. 25, 1993--

FOR OURSELVES

Edited from "Goddess in the Office" by
Z. E. Budapest

Wild wimin have a keen sense of smell. Carefully chosen scents will act as a personal shield against crowded rooms or the invasion of your private space. Use natural scents, not the cheaper chemical imitations, which may give you a headache.

Scents are personal, so wear what makes you feel best. The following are suggestions from Z.:

JASMINE....lifts the spirit, full of expectant energy. Can be used against fear, paranoia, pessimism, low self-confidence, and emotional suffering. (Rose or carnation can be used as alternative choice.)

HONEYSUCKLE....very feminine power scent that feeds Wild Wimin with messages of fulfillment, so she wants to eat less. At work this scent will create an atmosphere of wealth, well-being, and prosperity. Wear it and visualize more money or power for yourself... the gentle, effortless leadership that others are honored to follow.

LAVENDER....is the scent of trust, and also the antidote for male lust. Men start thinking of their mothers and are turned off.

BERGAMOT OIL....protects against all evil. If asked what you're wearing, say it's "Strike Back" perfume.

ROSEMARY....stimulates memory, love, and the conscious mind. Smelling it often will keep you young.

PATCHOULI....is a mental energizer. Will remind you of wildness, mossy fields, and frolicks in the nude.

ROSE OIL....signals mothering instinct. People will relax and feel you care about them.

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Two year-around cottages available for womyn on Lake Michigan, ten minutes south of Saugatuck, Michigan. The cottages are heated and fully furnished. The kitchens are well-equipped, and linens and towels are provided for bedroom and bath. The livingrooms have a fireplace with wood provided. Gas grills outdoors for barbecuing. The beach is in front at the foot of the bluff. Hiking trails, sand dunes, cross-country skiing, shops, galleries, restaurants, antique shops nearby.

Call Susan in Saugatuck at (616) 857-2586.



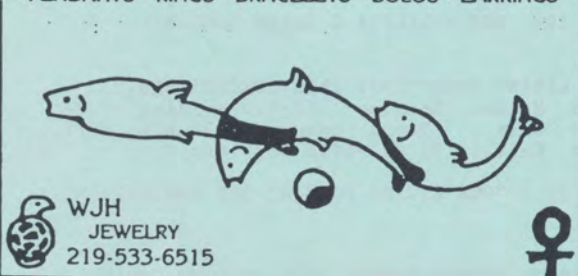
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DECEMBER



SUN

MON

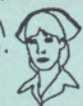
TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

AA Elkhart 7 p.m. every Sunday		Support Group 7 p.m.	1 NOW Mtg. YWCA 7:30 p.m.	2	3 Video Night Niles 7:00 p.m.	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Happy BIRTHDAY Emily Dickinson!	11
12 Open Arms Mtg. 6:30 p.m.	13	14	15 Reservations due for 3rd Fri. Out	16	17 3rd Friday Out 7 p.m.	18 Game Night 6:00 p.m.
19	20	21	22 	23	24	25 HAPPY BIRTHDAY CLARA! BARTON! 
26 PFLAG 2-4 p.m.	27	28	29	30	31	AA South Bend 8 p.m.

Subscription for Open Arms -- \$10.00/year

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to: Open Arms, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN
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OTHER COMING EVENTS

THE FOLLOWING ARE AT THE MADAM WALKER
THEATRE IN INDIANAPOLIS. Sponsored by
Branching Out Productions. Call (317) 637-
2906 for ticket info.

DEC. 4 - DEIDRE McCALLA & CHRIS WILLIAMSON

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303 S. Holmes, Lansing. \$5-\$10 sliding scale.
Womyn Only. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Mich.
time. Call (517) 487-6495 for info.

DEC. 11 - "OUR LIVING ROOM'S" 3RD ANNIVERSARY

MAY 19-22 INTERNATIONAL GODDESS FESTIVAL in
1994 Santa Cruz. Call the Goddess Fax/
Hotline for info: (510) 444-7724.
\$300 if tickets paid for in 1993.
\$400 if tickets bought in 1994.

JUNE 26 - MARCH ON THE UNITED NATIONS in
1994 New York City to affirm human
rights of lesbians and gays.
More info later.

Same Time Every Month

1st Wednesday - NOW Meeting, 7:30 p.m., YWCA,
802 N. Lafayette, South Bend.

4th Sunday - P-FLAG Meeting 2-4 p.m., Christ
the King Lutheran Church, 17195
Cleveland Rd., South Bend.

Happy Winter
Solstice